

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINR, PINS, BC

SUBJECT: BOTSWANA PRESIDENT INTERVIEW ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN EXCLUSIVE AUGUST 31 RAND DAILY MAIN INTERVIEW, PRESIDENT KHAMA CONDEMNED VORSTER AND SOUTH AFRICA'S POLICIES, CRITICIZED THE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES FOR BRINGING NO ECONOMIC PRESSURE TO BEAR ON SOUTH AFRICA, AND SPECULATED THAT THE TYPE OF AID OFFERED BY DR. KISSINGER TO THOSE WHO WISHED TO CLOSE THEIR BORDERS WOULD NOT MAKE UP FOR HARDSHIPS CREATED WERE BOTSWANA TO TAKE OVER THE RHODESIA RAILWAY. DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE REQUESTED.

END SUMMARY.

2. IN LENGTHY RAND DAILY MAIL INTERVIEW OF AUGUST 31 (COPY POUCHED TO AF/S) BOTSWANA PRESIDENT KHAMA NOTED THAT RACIAL WAR WAS BECOMING A REALITY AND DEPLORED THE FACT THAT PRIME MINISTER VORSTER HAD NOT TAKEN STATESMAN-LIKE DECISIONS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION. IN THIS RESPECT, HE THOUGHT THAT THE RSA HAD PUT NO PRESSURE ON THE SMITH REGIME. TOO HE CONDEMNED THE TURNHALLE CONVENTION FOR THE OMISSION OF SWAPO AND ITS ORGANIZATION ALONG RACIAL LINES, AND LABELED THE HOMELAND POLICIES AS INHUMAN AND

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INJUST. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE ISSUE OF DETENTE BETWEEN THE

RSA AND OTHER AFRICAN STATES WAS DEAD.

3. ON SUBJECT OF THE POSSIBILITY OF THE GOB TAKING OVER THE RHODESIA RAILWAY, KHAMA SAID IT WOULD NOT BE EASY TO MOBILIZE SUFFICIENT INTERNATIONAL AID TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE. ONLY OFFER HE KNEW WAS THAT FROM DR. KISSINGER WHO SAID U.S. WOULD CONSIDER ASSISTING THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH WISHED TO CLOSE THEIR BORDERS. HE THOUGHT THAT "IN CASE OF BOTSWANA, PERHAPS, IT WASN'T REALIZED EXACTLY HOW MUCH IT WOULD MEAN TO CLOSE THE BORDER. IF WE WERE ABLE TO DO SO OUR WHOLE ECONOMY WOULD BE AFFECTED. SO THE TYPE OF AID THAT IS AT PRESENT CONTEMPLATED WOULD NOT AT ALL MAKE UP FOR THE INVONVENIENCES AND HARDSHIPS WE WOULD HAVE TO ENDURE."

4. TOO, KHAMA CRITICIZED THE WESTERN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE U.S.N FOR NOT USING THEIR ECONOMIC INFLUENCE FOR CHANGE IN THE RSA. IN THIS RESPECT HE CONSIDERED THAT CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD NO CONTACT WITH THE MINORITY REGIMES AND, THEREFORE, WOULD HAVE NO INFLUENCE ON THEM.

5. COMMENT: INTERVIEW WAS STANDARD KHAMA, I.E. FIRM BUT PRAGMATIC. KHAMA MADE CLEAR THAT BECAUSE OF GEORGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATION BOTSWANA WAS "VIRTUALLY A CAPTIVE OF EVENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA."

6. WOULD APPRECIATE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT ABLE TO GIVE CONCERNING RESPONSE EMBASSY MIGHT MAKE, IF ASKED ABOUT STATE OF PLAY ON U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMITMENT TO BOTSWANA SHOULD GOB TAKE OVER THE RAILROAD (SEE PARA 3).

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